



Dear Member

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Annual meeting – travel arrangements

An update / extension to the arrangement I described in our last newsletter: As well as a Season Ticket, other options include The Key, Oyster cards and any other mechanism (eg Freedom card) that demonstrates you are entitled to travel on Thameslink each day.

If you travel regularly, but using daily tickets, carnet tickets etc, then drop me a line and I will see what I can do. I will need the following information:

1. The station your tickets are normally valid to, the journey you normally make and the number of times you travel in a typical week
2. Your address

Annual meeting – a reminder

This will take place this Tuesday 19th April at 7:30pm in St Albans. We will be at the Friend’s Meeting House in St Albans as in 2015 and will be joined by Stuart Cheshire (Passenger Services Director on Thameslink), other Thameslink Managers, together with Network Rail Management.

Questions

If you have any further questions for the meeting, please send them to me as soon as possible - no promise. We’ll cover off the ticket office changes (more on this below), but I don’t think it appropriate that it dominate the Q&A session.

Location of meeting

We’ve been to the Friend’s Meeting House before - it is at 7 Upper Lattimore Road, St Albans, Herts, AL1 3UD; from the station, head down Victoria Street [↗] towards the centre of St Albans and turn right at the second set of traffic lights (where there is a Cotswold Outdoor Sports shop) and the Friends Meeting house is approximately 4th on the left - see <https://goo.gl/maps/b2sCnZ4XZ3p>. The hall is accessible by the disabled and has an accessible toilet.

↗ Victoria Street is straight ahead from platform 4; from platform 1, turn right and cross the bridge over the railway.

Subscriptions

Subscriptions for 2016/17 are due for payment from 1 April. Please send a cheque for £3.00 (single membership) or £5.00 (joint membership) as soon as possible. I will of course accept payment at the meeting on 19 April.



Thank you

Malcolm Howe

Treasurer

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Harpenden, AL5 5TS >> *Please note: New Address*

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Do you have a Travelcard on the 'key'?

If so, hopefully you have already received this:

Due to a technical issue which Transport for London are working to resolve, some of the Oyster readers on London buses are currently not accepting key smartcards and they are showing them as being invalid. Although bus drivers have been briefed to accept the key, we've been made aware this is not always the case.

If you have had to pay for your bus journey with an Oyster or contactless card, please send your journey statement into our Customer Relations team and we will provide a full refund. Please give us as much information you can - which bus route you used, where and at what time you boarded, so that we can share this information with Transport for London.

Please note that this issue is not affecting travel on the London Underground or National Rail services. If you do wish to revert your season ticket back to a paper one, we will do this at no cost; please visit one of our ticket offices.

GTR / Thameslink – Possible Strike action

There are widespread reports in the media that the Unions will be balloting for industrial action regarding three disputes:

1. Ticket Office changes - across all GTR operating lines.
2. Introduction of 12 car Driver Only Operated trains on Gatwick Express (the trains are already DOO, but limited to a maximum of 10 cars)
3. Changes to the role of the second person (ie Conductor / Guard) on Southern services

Only one of these disputes directly impacts us (the first). Whilst the proposal “as is” has been refused, this is primarily due to the need to improve the transition and detail / deliver the improved service.

It is early days on all three disputes, but I believe it credible that all 3 will lead to industrial action in time. Given the nature of the contract, GTR will have very limited room to manoeuvre to meet Union demands, and I cannot see the DfT easily allowing the cost increases likely to be incurred.

At this stage, this can be no more than a “heads up”.

Other

- Luton Airport has announced its aspirations for a light rail or similar link between the airport and Luton Airport Parkway and reminded us of its desire for 4 fast trains per hour to London (by ‘fast’, I believe they mean non-stop). There is currently 1 per hour (an East Midlands Service). For now, it seems that a watching brief is needed - in due course, we will want to be sure that any government funding is ‘fairly’ allocated and any increase in the fast service is also a ‘fair’ use of capacity.



- Brent Cross Thameslink station has now been approved by the Government. In due course we'll want to comment on the design, the proposed service pattern and the impact on Cricklewood.

Regards

Neil

Neil Middleton

17 April 2016